

DARBY'S  
PROPHYLACTIC  
FLUID.

A Household Article for Universal Family Use.

For Scarlet and Typhoid Fever, Diphtheria, Sallow, Eruptions, Etc., Etc., Etc.

For the cure of all Contagious Diseases. Persons waiting on the sick should use it freely. Scarlet Fever has never been known to spread where the Fluid was used. Yellow Fever has been cured with it after black vomit had taken place. The worst cases of Diphtheria yield to it.

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THE BRECKENRIDGE NEWS.

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NO. 5.

THE DYING WIFE'S FAREWELL.

Written for THE BRECKENRIDGE NEWS.

My spirit beats its bars of clay,  
It struggles to be free;  
The Master beckons me away,  
I must leave thee.

The Saviour stands upon the shore,  
To hear me o'er the tide;  
Do not detain me, I implore,  
Bright angels round me glide.

The waters cold I do not fear,  
Weep not for me, I pray;  
Why dost thou shed that precious tear?  
O ask me not to stay.

The other shore is wondrous fair  
Beyond your utmost ken;  
And hosts of angels waiting there;  
Do not detain me, then.

I long to walk the golden street,  
To change these pangs for ease;  
To cast my crown before His feet,  
And rest beneath the tree.

I'll bathe my limbs in gladdest streams,  
Which from the throne do flow,  
And gaze my Saviour's loving beams;  
You'll let me go, I know.

You tell me that my children dear  
So need a mother's care;  
You tell me of the orphan's tale,  
Of pain and toil and care.

His promise now to me is sweet,  
His word to me is true;  
"I'll guide the wandering of their feet,"  
"I'll will their ways secure."

"I am the orphan's friend," He cries,  
"The children are my care;  
To meet their mother in the skies  
"I'll will their hearts prepare."

Trust Him, my love; do not grieve;  
That all His ways are best;  
He'll keep my darling till that day  
They enter into rest.

And as they come, their journey o'er,  
When'er they reach the shining shore,  
I'll meet them on the strand.

And, then, forever with me there,  
They'll dwell in heavenly place,  
Where sin nor sorrow ever dare  
The lovings of His grace.

Weep not for me, but always sing,  
The triumphs of that grace;  
"Till surely, too, my husband bring  
To his waiting embrace."

THE FOOL'S REVENGE.

CHAPTER I.

Every traveler in Italy should take with him, besides his modern guides, some of those rude and yet exceedingly faithful woodcuts or copper-plates which served as topographical photographs to the Imaginary Voyager of the Middle Ages. Spite of war, time and decay, the now dead cities will live again to those who study how little the main lines have changed; even the streets dedicated to certain trade patron saints are lined with the booths or stalls of men in the same occupation. The castle foundations remain, the monastery may be a graveyard or a picture gallery, and the mill on the river a wash-house, but there the edifices linger, as far as base is concerned, which were flourishing in 1500.

Go even now to Faenza with such a pictorial map as those cited, and you may restore "the city of crockery" to its mediæval aspect; only, one must imagine the glass windows clean and unstained, the stone fresh from the quarry, the hemmed in, suffocated vines and trees freely blooming in broad convent gardens, and the stagnant canals and sluggish river glittering with animation, and pure from their mountain springs.

When, in 1488, a war-worn freemason, the gray and glorious Guido Malatesta, grandson of the great head of that house, Sigismund, Lord of Rimini, selected Faenza as a refuge in his sixtieth year, it was a pleasant town, notwithstanding the gloom cast around, morally, by the character of its sovereign, and that, more material, if its fifty religious structures, with sky-reaching spires, and the huge piles of the liege lord and the guilds' halls.

Guido was a type of the fighter for his own hand of that age; tall, all bone and muscle, hawklike nose, swarthy complexion, hair flattened down on his brow, and pressed in a circle by the helmet he had always worn from boyhood up. His soldiers, of any nationality, liked him because he was just in severity, and reserved blind fury for charges on the enemy. Aze had strengthened his command of self; but even after fifty, his hand flew to his dagger-holster in his girdle when an argument waxed warm, or was even unduly lengthened. That was the measure which he contemptuously flung down on the table when a question arose among the debaters after an action as to the duration of a truce. "As long as my knife from haft to point!" he had said. It was scorn for trifling, not rash baseness, for to the period of his recent marriage, the prince who had employed him, had never accused him of committing a foolish deed.

To say that he had accepted the invitation of the Duke of Manfredi without misgiving, were advancing too much. For Faenza's master had a reputation of magnificent hospitality, which was only too cordial when a fair dame was at his board. But Malatesta had no doubt trusted to the fear which his fame inspired; an old man who was not so worn or weary as to be unable to rally a thousand dare-devils for any enterprise, was not to be lightly irritated. Besides, the handsome duchess was reputed jealous a Bentivoglio in blood, who might not scruple to use poison or steel upon her mate if he offended, as the courtiers said; vexed themselves at her disposition for marrying sport. Happily for her prospects, it was whispered by her waiting maids that the lady was going to Bologna to her father's on a visit about the time when the Countess Malatesta came to town.

In the garden, inclosed in a thick wall of the ducal palace, some petty noblemen were amusing themselves. They spoke of the matter alluded to above, and all the while eyed with marked repugnance—for they were young and comely—and more malice—for they were dull and rapid—and no less warlike, for they were weak

against such a foe—the familiar spirit of Galeotto Manfredi.

It was his jester.

Bertuccio, otherwise Rigoletto, "the merry-maker," was humpbacked, dyspeptic, and a professional joker, a threefold affliction which made him spiteful.

In the town they said he spat vitriol; at court he was the acknowledged master of tongue-fence, hitting through faults in answer as if he knew them all by instinct, cracking his jests upon not merely his own lord, but on Medici, Imola, Venice, all the mighty men of Italy. All hated him because they never could doubt that he bore no one good will.

Nature and man had made him most cruel, cowardly, and evilly disposed. It was an oriental idea to have the wisdom of *Esop* in the hideous frame of a misshapen creature, and it had added to the terror of European courts, where the master was always a tyrant doomed to be poisoned if he let the poppies grow to maturity and exhale their perfume. In his excess of shame and misery, Bertuccio was not allowed to do anything but what would raise a laugh. Other men might now and then grumble as the pleasure prompted them; the poor folk *squealed* like rooks under the turrets, as said Saviozzo, the bard of Siena, the soldier mocked at the rusty ray they called their colors, the gypsy and the beggar sang satirical songs, the galley-slaves swore roundly at the oar, but this wretch was bound to muffle his misery in mirth.

Manfredi needed no spur to move rapidly in evil courses, but the commonest excuse for his evil acts was to throw the blame of their conception and furtherance on the buffoon. They said right and left that it was Bertuccio who depraved him, corrupted him and brutified him like an imp of Satan, only to make his vice and tyranny more odious.

Friendless, alone, not even sure of his master's protection, a more unenviable position than the toad's, amid the gold, silk and velvet, could not be imagined.

Nevertheless, he strode about on his crooked limbs, showing his yellow and jagged teeth, apparently as confident in his protective venom as a tarantula, though he guessed that whenever three lords held their heads together, it was to devise some rare revenge that would lay the tough hide off his hunch for the word-beatings he had given them.

"Ugh! there's our poet, the sweet song-man, Dell' Aquila Bianca," muttered he, eyeing a group around a handsome gentleman to whose melodious accents there was an attention rarely accorded in that court. "The middlemost man of those green and fresh youths, but I will admit it, the lofliest if worth be the criterion. He has spoken kindly enough to me at times, but these human frogs," he added with a return of his acerbity, "sing at all hours and equally as mellifluous now as then. What is he caterwauling? some secret passion. A cunning dog who speaks of heaven rarely lest he offend the Church, which is his mistress, and of the Duke never! He's right!"

He approached the troubadour unceremoniously, breaking in upon his wail at the severity of loyal friends with a verse of practical philosophy:

"The one wears false faces,  
The other embraces  
His duke, and disgraces  
The fools trust them to all!

"The fool trusts them to all!  
Let them steal the honey,  
And apes praise for money;  
For only his careless of all!"

"Peace, thou wanton wight!" said the interrupted poet, with less warmth than might have been expected. "And no more of your words in snappish sort!"

"Never heed him, Serafino," said a fellow noble jingling his chain, four times round his neck, and the ends pendent over his purple doublet plentifully peppered with pearls. "Go hence, you naughty varlet with the viper tongue! go, wag your long beard—badge of your foolery, in the teeth of the leopardess lately put in the lion house. Her talons may scratch sharpness into you, for now you live by a trade you are not fitted for!"

"I, Ascoli, said the jester, while turning away. "Like yourself, I do not pursue the calling of my father or I should be making chains for unfaithful hounds, and you would not be wearing them."

"Go to the beast!" cried the noble, in the tone of the Roman of old.

"To the beast who is content with one collar and a single chain—there be modest cats."

"Away, bad stalk of a worse stem!"

"And you stay to listen to poetry, Midas ears, grease-eat of an illustrious house; when you vaunt of the heat of action, you mean that before the kitchen fire!"

"Silence, fool, or—"

"I shall be laddered and mitered? But my paper cap will protect my head better than your new helmet which is never worn and up my ladder I only go to the pillory, whilst yours will lead your hanging-back to the executioner's knife."

The infuriated gallant, who best knew how much of prophesy there lay in the speaker's gibes at his treachery, drew his turkey blade, but his friends stopped him, while the object of his ire, after a mocking gesture out of the numerous collection which supplied even a dumb Italian with plentiful means of annoyance, calmly went his way.

Before him there began a little bustle in the courtyard; servants were preparing a horse-litter by prudently uncoating it, for the roads over the Apennines were covered of disbanded soldiers, as brigands styled themselves; and stronger men were arming who were to be the escort.

The fool indolently annunciated his party-colored clothes, and softly jingled the bells in his long-legged cap, as he went to gaze on the leopardess in his cage by the fountain representing Niobe in Tears.

"So sleek, so graceful, and so dangerous!" said he, "I long to see her let loose. Trust me to draw the bolt, and loose my leopard, when the time comes," muttered he in a harsh voice, which was more broken than befitting a man perhaps not in his fortieth year, but humpbacked, like dwarfs, age speedily.

When, however, there was a loud murmur of salutations, and out from the arcade came the captain of the crossbowmen clinking in gilt and blued steel armor, a squire or two, her negress, and the courtiers who were more particularly attached to her ladyship, Bertuccio left the leopardess with a final flip of an apple-pip at its ear, which caused it to snarl without opening its eyes.

"It is my lady," he muttered, "in all her pride! the leopardess coroneted! Hum, ha! Her lightness and brightness doth cast such a splendor, There's none that fit but the stars to attend her!"

But, though now so pleasant and sweet to the ear, which caused it to snarl without opening its eyes.

The harsh locust-like voice touched the ears of the Duchess, and she singled him out with a jeweled finger for the honor of helping her into the dismounted litter. She retained him, too, with his head within the heavy curtains.

"Bertuccio," said she, bending on him her big black eyes, burning with profound feeling, "I must go to my father, averse though I be to leave my soft hearted husband along with that baby-wif of Guido the Freeland. But I rely on your faithfulness, whom others call faithless, bitter, loving wrong for evil's sake, my lord's worst counselor!"

"Ahem, how we are flattered!" remarked the jester, twisting his mouth like an antique mask of Pan.

"You are only the fool by your coat and cap," she went on, studying his face profoundly. "You know that by kneeling to the fire you will save yourself burning your boots."

"Nay, I am likely to burn them sole and straps in the end, for I will go through hell-fire for your grace," was the blunt reply, as he, in his turn gazed, undaunted by her beauty, into her eyes.

Verily, the Duchess of Faenza was a woman who should hardly have dreaded a rival. She was young and famed for loveliness. Her black tresses had a waviness in them which admirably amended the somewhat exaggerated length of her features and lessened their olive tint; her eyes were ever full of fire, burning now slowly but never smoldering, seldom laughing, but on the alert with intelligence. Her simplest movement was full of nobility, and bore witness to the perfection of a figure overcharged with the comely some apparel of a fine lady of the age. Her dress was a heavy velvet which served merely as a field on which patient nuns had strewn innumerable flowers in colored stones with stems and leaves in silk and metal thread; a satin mantle, with a wadded hood to cover her hair, in which an endless string of Indian pearls was inextricably twisted, was drawn in at the waist with a gold and black cord, its tassels being supplanted by a dagger and a cross.

"But I'll trust your love of mischief, not of me," said he. "That's safest! I must know how far this fancy for the pale Ginevra; mark their meetings and communications, you can, for you're private with my lord."

"Blind men and rich men always have companions. I am a crooked staff to lean upon, but, naively, he trusts me," returned the fool chuckling, and causing his hump to vibrate, so that the bystanders could not imagine the hidden dialogue was anything but merry.

She gave him a ring of bloodstone.

"Seal your misdeeds with this," she proceeded in the same undertone. "Pick out a good rider who can reach me in three hours, and count on me as soon as to be with you, if—" she paused, ground her strong teeth, but, mastering her passion, pursued coolly enough, "Mark, man, do not write on mere suspicion; let evil thought ripen to evil act, and so let me strike sudden in the full flush of your guilty joys, and strike home. No Bentivoglio pardons," added she, with the pride of races.

"Everything bad is possible," said Rigoletto grimacing amusedly, "there are more men in jail than women at prayers, but there is no such thing as a saintless dame, and nothing is so dangerous as a king who seeks pleasures."

"Dangerous to himself also," she murmured.

"To all around him! Python slew more men in his death throes than when he first attacked the Roman army in all his flush of unpricked blood."

And he shook his head in warning solemnity. She knew all that his movement signified, but little cared for her own peril; no doubt the town was her husband's, every stone and soul, from the Ravenna gate in the north to that of the canal in the south; from the hospital in the east to the Imola gate opposing. The courtiers, natives, hated the Bolognese as each Italian citizen detested all others; the townsfolk liked the Duke's liberality, and his taste rarely told on their wives and daughters; it was their chestnut wood coffers on which their knives and picklocks were eager most to be whetted. The lady of the foreign house knew that she had not an ally within the walls.

"Tush!" cried she, careless who heard her till he hushed her with the laying of his finger on his lips. "Give me my vengeance. Then come what may. Enough," she said, loudly, "I am resolved, Bertuccio, remember!"

She waved her hand out of the curtain folds, the buffoon drew back respectfully, and the litter, guarded by a score of men, left the grounds by a small gate in the tower, crossed the great square where the Cathedral towered, and so by the bridge

gate departed from the town, and soon was upon the road, impregnated with balmy odors and the fine seeds of grasses and weeds, sparkling in the undulating sunbeams. Here and there a venturesome tiller glanced up timorously and prepared to flee with his spade if the force should be a hostile scouting party, so full was the medieval husbandman of hourly terrors.

Her confidant looked after till the gateway gate was heavily awning to, and murmured as he stowed the jewel in his breast:

"These proud ones of earth seem to think nobody has wrongs but themselves! ha, ha! *volgi e gloriosi*—we remain akin in that, but there is a difference; if mostly ye proud ones avenge yourselves in a common way, we that are vulgar obtain our vengeance in a glorious fashion. So mote mine be! She says that none but she means to revenge them? No Bentivoglio pardons, nor does Bertuccio. That vile, twisted, withered, hunch-backed, court buffoon; a thing to make mirth, and to be made mirth of, a something betwixt ape and man, but he claims to run in couples with your ladyship! You hunt Manfredi—I hunt Malatesta," said he, looking up at the wing of the building in the shadow of which he was coming, "try which of the two has sharper fangs!"

CHAPTER II.

"Say what you will, Ascoli," observed one of the knot of nobles, who had left the poet to his own devices as they saluted the departing duchess, "the highway is none too safe; and I would have sent fifty spearmen with my lady, instead of two tents of bowmen. The chief defect of my lord is that he trusts to the head; to craft and not to arms."

"You are unfair, my Lord Torelli, interposed the buffoon intervening abruptly; 'why do you say arms? You should say legs! Yours did famous service in carrying you out of danger at Sarzana. I think they may be trusted.'"

All laughed merrily except the victim, who scowled and cried:

"Thou scurrilous knave! I'll be even with thee."

"That were pity," rejoined the jester, "for a bump would be a sore disfigurement upon a back that you're so fond of showing!"

"This rogue needs gagging," grumbled another.

"What! for speaking truth? I cry you mercy! Well I wend how ugly it must sound to a Florentine Ambassador, like Lord Ascoli."

"Pay no heed," cried another fopling, "the slave is paid to find us wit!"

"Hold there," said Bertuccio. "No man is bound to impossibilities!—'tis a common maxim of the law; how then can I find wit for an Ordelaffi?"

All laughed again, save the Marsyas who was being flayed.

"Toad!" said he. "Foul mouthed scoundrel! Warped in wit and limb! My lord gives his monkey too much rope."

"Enough and to spare when your hanging day comes," retorted the jester. "But I leave you to your reasoning, for yonder is our poet, Serafino, awakened by your lord appreciation of my quips, and he may need some rhymes."

"Let's complain to his grace," suggested another, who did not feel the healing properties of the philosophy of curing his smart by laughing at the contortions of the neighbor, stung more acutely.

"Who laughs when he is not the target, Not I! I'll have a revenge achieved with mine own hand," said the Florentine.

"But how? how?"

"Tell me," went on the young nobleman, "where your jester spends his spare time. He disappears daily for a while."

"Hides in the library. He's fond of books. He has no old friend; so he dwells with an old book. There's the Pierre of Provence and the Twelve Peers, and Deeds of the Giants who were Prince's Sons, and such like fiddle-faddle. He draws his quips from these wells of wisdom."

"Ha, ha!"

"Follows the Captain Malatesta like a shadow, wherever he goes in town."

"Bah, that's upon his lord's business."

"Well, I," said the Florentine, with unconcealed scorn for these dullards, "I have followed your merry-andrew. Better than I you all know the Blackened Ward, where a hundred years ago, in a stone house, dear the jester secrets himself. He counts a treasure, or he dabbles in the black art."

"It," said Torelli, quickly, "there is a pot of gold or a money bag in view, I would pierce the mystery. As for the devil—" Here he hesitated, but, as all eyes were upon him, valourously continued:

"I care as little for Satan as the carp in the fountain-basin yonder for apples."

"Pish!" cried the Florentine, testily.

"Pish! what say you, angels or devils, men, shall we go and invade the jester's den?"

They united hands now to make the descent; all save Serafino, who fought shy from the moment the idea was broached. The Blackened Ward bid fair to be illumined strangely in a few nights. Indeed, only one failed at the first council that night: it was Torelli.

The fact was the young gentleman was a thirsty soul of which to cast such drops of comforting hope as philosopher's stone, miser's hoard, portable gold, the charms of the era in which he flourished his plumes rather than his rapier.

"I shall be put in prison for losing all my money at play, while the devil of it is that the Duke would enrage me if I won any of his. My purse is cut out of the winking cap, and the more I look at it blinking by my side the flatter it seems to be, although to the uninitiated eye the rings of lead and coils of brass plump out like a mummy's teeth in an old hag's cheek. It is all very

loyal to one's order to sing: Long life to the Duke and our lady and men of property; but I shall soon have no claim to be one of the latter. It is settled; I have coaxed Peter and teased Paul, but they will not lend a broad piece."

He pulled his cap down firmly, pulled up his boots, pulled out his mustaches, pulled in his deceptive purse, and stoutly enough advanced without remembering his comrades, into the town to the partly abandoned suburb.

But as the shade darkened and he approached the quarter given over to lepers, Jews, gypsies, beggars, and other gentry who shrank away from the watch-house, his pace slackened like the criminal at the cart tail who went so slowly under the lash that a humanitarian remonstrated and received this tolerably cynical reply:

"I am not going to move any faster to relieve your feeling heart than to relieve my own shoulder, and the more the thong falls the more I shall walk at my pleasure."

Presently Torelli stopped altogether; not at a lion in his path, nor altogether at a lamb. A rarely good looking lass had paused like himself and only a few steps before him, between the stone staging on which executions were performed and the cross let into the wall of the public granary, all in the little Haymarket square.

"By all the vagrants who trudge the highway with an oak tree slip in one hand and t'other put in their bosom, this is no common widow of the pillory!" cried he in delight, as the girl, kneeling to the carving in a large niche, could not but show a marvelously neat ankle beyond her curtailed petticoats. "But, but—mother of me! she's making a blunder no novice could commit! She's standing up the right candle to the Dragon under the heel of St. Michael? However," he added, with a touch of the rebellion to the Church common to his class, "she best knows—or serpent or scorpion, which is her own patron!"

Her strange devotions ended, all in a gibberish unfamiliar to the listener, the girl sprang to her feet, having heard him breathe, and she spied him with her large, bright eyes, black as a carbuncle, in the gloom deepening around the pillory.

"'Tis a Bohemian!" he cried. "After all, she was quite right to burn her taper in honor of Old Nick."

The stranger was a buxom young girl, peculiarly provoking in her mien and beauty, which her sordid frippery did not but partially eclipse; like the chameleon, she ceased to be herself in aspect every five minutes: nervous, fantastic, full of starts and turns like a born dancer, she stood with the piteous expression of a startled fawn, but the very next instant her glare was that of Diana setting the pack upon Actæon.

Torelli fell back a step till the stone pile arrested him, but as the gypsy smiled instantly, he recovered some courage, and even came forth from the cover.

"At all events she may be a sword swallower, but it's a little mouth," he reasoned, "and she will attempt to engulf me. To her, my man; after all, these gypsies spy out every thing, and, with a little money and much flattery, I shall be well informed on how to reach Bertuccio's money-chest before these hang-dogs, my comrades, enter this district. To her!"

But